

The Chronicle of the Cipriani–Merolli Family (1870–2020)

A Family History of Craftsmanship, Art, Morality, and Social Change

This chronicle serves to preserve an extraordinary heritage and to document a period of history spanning over 150 years. It tells the story of the rise of two family branches, of resilience and loss, of artistic creation and master craftsmanship, of migration, modernization, and the moral hazards of a changing society.

I. The Genealogical Connection of Two Worlds

The Cipriani and Merolli families unite two distinct but complementary traditions:

- **The Cipriani Branch (Ceccano/Rome):** Founded in 1870 by the patriarch of craftsmanship who established the *Antica tappezzeria Cipriani*. A line of upholsterers, furniture artists, and entrepreneurs who shaped Roman interior design for generations.
- **The Merolli Branch (Celano/Avezzano):** An educated line from the Abruzzan region, characterized by jurists, writers, and intellectuals.

The union of both lines was formed through the marriage of **Vincenzo Cipriani** and **Gabriella Merolli**, whose lives became the foundation of a large family.

II. Key Ancestors and Personalities

1. Enea Merolli (1879–1963)

Jurist, Poet, Survivor, Intellectual

- **Birth:** Monday, March 3, 1879, in Celano.
- **Pseudonym:** *Ariele di Lem*.
- **Defining Experience:** Survivor of the Avezzano earthquake (Jan 13, 1915).

- **Work:** *Il Trionfo della Vita* (The Triumph of Life, 1916). Enea embodies the spiritual side of the family—a man between law, science, and poetry, shaped by a catastrophe that defined his writing.

2. Vincenzo Cipriani (1905–1991)

Patriarch of 13 Children, Entrepreneur, Master Craftsman

- **Profession:** Head of the atelier at Viale Parioli 91, Rome.
- **Legacy:** Managed up to 10 employees; the atelier was a symbol of 150 years of tradition.
- **Late Years:** Suffered from Alzheimer's disease, eventually losing the memories of his children.

3. Gabriella Cipriani-Merolli (1918–1964)

Master of the Curved Needle, Poet, Mother of a Large Family

- **Profile:** Gifted craftswoman and poet; author of *Vigna Clara* (1963).
- **Death:** Passed away at age 46 from cervical cancer. She bridged the gap between art and manual labor.

III. The 13 Siblings – A Family in the Heart of Rome

All children were born at Via Eustachio Manfredi 17, Parioli District.

- **Giovanni:** Cultural manager and bibliophile (Via Salaria 300).
- **Armando (b. 1947):** Upholsterer and long-term manager of *Piscina Don Bosco*.
- **Luigi:** Master upholsterer; led the *Antica tappezzeria Cipriani* until its closure in October 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown.
- **Lucia Nadia (Lucina) (b. 1955):** Artist and oriental dancer. Emigrated to Austria in 1975; active in the *Halleiner Liedertafel*.
- **Maurizio, Maria Teresa, Stefano († 2022), Massimo, Maria Letizia, Liliana, Silvio, Paolo, Gabriele.**

IV. The Tragedy of Isolina Cipriani (1933–1950)

A True Story of Illusions, Love, and the Shadows of Cinema

- **Identity:** Daughter of Filomena Cipriani; niece of Vincenzo.
- **The Dream:** Aspirant actress; had a role as a martyr in *Quo Vadis* (1951).
- **The Event:** On Sept 25, 1950, she fell from the 4th/5th floor of the Pensione Trapani on Via Veneto after a tragic love affair with director Goffredo Alessandrini.
- **Last Words:** "*Goffredo, Goffredo amore mio!*" Her story remains a mirror of the moral dangers of the post-war era and the illusions of *Cinecittà*.

V. Sociological and Psychological Context

1. **Intergenerational Transmission:** The heritage flows from Enea's intellectualism and Gabriella's poetry to Vincenzo's craftsmanship and Lucia Nadia's archival work.
2. **The Decline of Craftsmanship:** The closure of the family business in 2020 symbolizes the end of an era in European social history.
3. **Resilience:** Despite multiple traumas (earthquakes, early deaths, business closures), the family maintained a strong sense of identity and duty.

Summary and Appreciation

The Cipriani–Merolli family serves as a prime example of how history condenses into individual biographies. This chronicle does not just preserve memories; it demonstrates how a family witnessed and shaped the transformation of Europe over 150 years.